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*Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi*

MARCH 2002

## MARCH HAPPENINGS

The March meeting of the Hancock County Historical Society will be held at the Kate Lobrano House, 108 Cue Street, Bay Saint Louis on Thursday, March 21 at 12:00 noon.

Our Speaker will be Joseph C., Gandolini who is the community education speaker and heritage education speaker for the River Road Historical Society / Destrehan Plantation. Mr. Gandolini is also a retired Board certified and Licensed Psychotherapist and a mental Health Administrator in St. Charles Parish (where Destrehan Plantation is located). He has been a part-time resident of Hancock County for the past 23 years. This should be a most interesting talk.

As always, please make your reservations as early as possible to help us plan the luncheon. Reservations are necessary. Price \$6.

Historical Society hosts and hostesses received guest at the Kate Lobrano House on March 12th during the Bay-Waveland day of the 55th Annual Pilgrimage. The Pilgrimage is presented by the Gulf Coast Council of Garden Clubs. In spite of the day-long rain the event had a very large attendance.

## NEW MEMBERS

Marie T. Lacoste, Bay St. Louis,  
Michele Avette Tassin-Gomez, BSL  
Margie M. Morken, Bay St. Louis  
Reginald R. Morken, Bay St. Louis  
Patricial Pitalo, Bay St. Louis  
Cate Schweitzer-Toepfer, Harvey LA



THE FOXWORTH FAMILY

## DIARY OF JOB M. FOXWORTH

The *Diary of Job M. Foxworth* is an important contribution to Mississippi's Civil War heritage. The *Diary* is unique in that Job M. Foxworth was highly educated and his writing is full of allusions to Greco-Roman history, Scripture and Romantic poetry.

Job M. Foxworth began his first diary at Centenary College in Jackson, Louisiana, in March 1861. That diary, according to Charles L. Sullivan, Chairman of the Department of Social Studies at MS Gulf Coast Junior College, Perkinston Campus, was lost. The following excerpts are from the second diary which begins February 12, 1862.

Portions of this diary are missing. According to Charles L. Sullivan, the Diary lay as a "curio upon the counter of the mercantile establishment of one of his sons for years. Sometimes, unable to secure other note paper, the son tore out random pages. At last the son recognized the value of the diary and refrained from such treatment of it."

Jobias Mithais Foxworth was born April 19, 1841. He enlisted as a private in Company D (the Jeff Davis Sharpshooters), 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Miss. Inf., Confederate States of America. That unit was mustered into State service at Holmesville (Columbia), Marion County, on May 4, 1861. On September 27, 1861, he was elected 2<sup>nd</sup>



Lieutenant and held that rank until wounded in the Battle of Shiloh April 6, 1862.

The following accounts are recorded in his second diary which commences on February 12, 1862, while the Jeff Davis Sharpshooters were quartered at Camp Lovell, Shieldsboro, Bay St. Louis, Mississippi. The exact location of the camp is not known, however, from details mentioned it seems as if it were located fairly close to the center of town.

**Febr'y 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1862** "On the morning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> a laughable incident occurred in our street. An old white rooster had been in the habit of lodging in E. Applewhite's tent, much to the discomfiture of all the inmates. For several mornings they bore it with sublime forbearance, but when this ceased to be a virtue the redoubtable Elisha swore vengeance and declared that if he were bothered the next morning he should enforce a penalty upon the offending cock which his owner would appreciate. Sure enough, the following morning about the time these animals, from instinct or observation, announce the hour of the dawn, this old fellow, with great annoyance to Elisha, set up an obstreperous crowing. Elisha, not relishing the time keeper, arose and buckled on his armor - gathered a lightwood knot and precipitated the old fellow from his sublime perch. After running him around a short while he at last dealt it a fatal blow. For Elisha was not to be outdone. The rooster fell and great was the fall thereof. There seemed to be no one to mourn his death - no owner could be discovered. However, Elisha was not zealous to find an owner, nor indeed was I. It was thought that the deceased would go to our mess, but at length Calvin Stuart came up and laid legal claim to the exclusive right of the corpse. Here ended my appetite for breakfast, as I lost such a pie for dinner."

Concerning Mississippi mosquitoes Job recorded in his diary: "Last week the little reptiles known as mosquitoes became very voracious in strife with us. I fought them manfully

for one night with my smoke artillery, but this had no effect. The next day I purchased me a bar of limitation for them. And that night, with much skill and trouble, we limited their host to about twelve large ones, who fattened so much during the night that they were easy preys the next morning."

"These insects, or rather mosquitoes, were no jocular circumstances, but sad, awful, dread realities of the clime. I think this must be the native land of Mosquitoes. Here they grow and flourish to a tremendous quantity and surprising stature. They certainly are indigenous to this county. Their biters, or proboscises, are something worse than yellow jackets and something of the same length with an elephant's. If anyone had been here and suffered them for one night in their unrestrained fury and energy, he would not dare think this an exaggerated account of their size, etc. In all my life I have never seen or felt anything to equal them....."

Job was also intrigued with the some of the local fruit trees. "I have noticed a plum growing on what seems to be an evergreen tree in town. I procured some of them to try. They proved very good, much better than our plums at home. They seem to have a good deal of sugar in them. Their skin is different from any I have ever before seen, thicker and more compact. Their seed is without hull and tastes very much like the inner bark of a peach tree, and smells similarly. I inquired the name. Someone told me they were called Jamaica plums. I have saved some of the seed and intend to send them home to be put in the ground for an experiment. ..."

**Febr'y 12<sup>th</sup>, 1862** After ending his diary entry one evening, Job added this postscript: "About 11 o'clock P.M. a schooner boat, supposed to be one of the launches in our service, fired three guns or shots at a fishing schooner making sail for the mouth of the Jourdan River. This brought her to. The sentinels posted at Cedar Point near the scene could make no further report of what occurred - could not tell which way

either boat went."

**Febr'y the 15<sup>th</sup>, 1862** "Nearly all this morning has been passed in conversation too trivial, if not harmful, to be remembered. This being the regular day for march, all were anxious to know if Col. Mayson did not deem it impracticable on account of the abundance of water resting on the face of mother Earth and the coldness of the weather. But contrary to their wishes he pronounced it a very fair and favorable day to march."

"Accordingly, at the sound of the drum, the companies repaired to the parade ground, whence he led us by camp to the beach, out past the post office, and then down the beach until about a mile and a half below the wharf, where he formed the battalion in two ranks countermarched. We then retraced our steps to our quarters, following the same route we had gone."

"It is now raining, a very cold rain. I had not at all expected to experience such sour weather while we remained upon the coast. No ice and hardly any frost were seen until this month. Since February has come in we have had a very disagreeable time. My hands are so numbed that I can scarcely hold a pen. I have a strong notion of crawling in bed to keep myself warm, as we have no fires in our tents."

"During the whole time I have been here I do not think I have seen a bird or anything of a wild nature, except occasionally a turkey brought in for sale by some countryman. It seems to be almost a barren land, productive of nothing except potatoes and a few garden plants....How could such a country suit any person!"

**Febr'y the 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1862** "This was the day for inspection and the weekly march. Accordingly all the companies repaired to the ground directly after eight o'clock A.M. The inspection ended, we broke into companies, marched back to camp, and then up the beach near old Manuel's establishment, and then down to the wharf, where the colonel halted the battalion and brought it to a



front. ... After we were brought to a rest in place, Captain Haskins fired eleven guns, a national salute, I suppose, though no one seemed to understand what it meant at the time....This may be called the birth day of our republic, at least the birth day of our permanent organization. Today Jefferson Davis takes the seat as our first president...."

Sometime in March of 1862, the company received orders to leave "at a moment's warning" ....they knew not where they were going. Even after the ships arrived to carry the troops away, no one knew where they were going. Job seems to sum up his experience at Camp Lovell in the following way: "About an hour after the Arrow started our boat raised steam and soon conveyed away the last of the seventh regiment of Mississippi volunteers from Shieldsboro and Camp Lovell. In this crowd was I. Some emotions of sorrow pervaded my breast on leaving many familiar objects of inanimate nature. There were no human being I hated to part with except Levis and old any where. Charley. Still I could not help grieving when I thought of the happy times I had witnessed there (I mean compared with the suffering of other soldiers; for all happiness and misery are comparative.) Nevertheless, I was perfectly satisfied at leaving to go.

Dale St. Amant

### BLACK TROOPS ON SHIP ISLAND

By Paul Estronza La Violette  
([www.annabellepublishing.com](http://www.annabellepublishing.com))

Last month was Black History Month. It is only fitting that we observe it with a story of a little known skirmish that occurred in our area between black Union Soldiers and Confederate Militia.

The black soldiers were the 2nd Louisiana Native Guard Volunteers confined to duty on Ship Island, ten miles off our coast. In essence, they were a forgotten regiment stationed in an out of the

way place. The black soldiers were under the command of a white Union army colonel Nathan W. Daniels who felt strong empathy with the former slaves of his command and the obscure post they occupied. He poured his thoughts into a diary that today presents a rare insightful narrative of the ways things were.

This intriguing diary of his command of black soldiers on Ship Island has been edited by C. P. Weaver and published by Louisiana State University Press in *Thank God My Regiment an African One*.

What follows is an extract from Daniels' Diary that gives a vivid account of the one chance that the black troops had to display their capabilities as soldiers. It describes a fierce skirmish just a short distance down our coast in East Pascagoula. In this action the black troops showed their mettle, fighting well and yet suffering most of their casualties and eventually defeat due to "friendly" fire from the Union gunboat *Jackson*, sent to protect them.

**Wednesday, April 8<sup>th</sup> 1863**

... Planned expedition to Pascagoula to capture Confederate troops said to be in possession of the place in a small force. Embarked on Steamer *Gen'l Banks* with 180 men. ...Steamed up the Sound to Horn Island leaving Ship Island at 3 PM. Had the 12 lb. howitzer ...with nine rounds of shell and nine rounds of grape [canister].— Came to anchor off Horn Island, intending to go into Pascagoula early tomorrow morning...

**Thursday, April 9<sup>th</sup> 1863**

Left Horn Island this A.M. ... steamed up to Round Island when we found the U.S. Gunboat *Jackson* blockading the Pascagoula River. Brought her letters and orders to join our expedition and open fire in case we were repulsed. Together steamed for Pascagoula and made the town at 9 o'clock ... when I landed two Companies...and took possession of

the Hotel, hoisted the American colors upon the Cupola and threw out pickets one half mile ... of the Hotel.

After taking possession of the Hotel, I ordered the colors to be hoisted, and made fast. We had hardly thrown out pickets when the lookout gave the alarm that the Confederate Cavalry were coming... I myself saw them from the Cupola of the Hotel coming down the Mobile Road in heavy force with banners waving, cutlass's flailing, evidently intending to make an immediate attack.

I immediately ordered the Retreat to be beaten, in order to mass my forces at the Hotel. ... The Cavalry came upon the extreme left in large force outnumbering us five to one and commenced the attack. Company B gave them a number of volleys when they fell back and came down the right upon Major Dumas and Capt Villevert and myself... This firing was rapid and excellent but our men stood fast, and though greatly outnumbered and without cover succeeded in fully repulsing them.

They formed again and came around the Hotel in the extreme right where they found Lieut. Jones with a part of Company—six men—He succeeded in emptying many of their saddles and driving them back. Up to this time we had lost one man killed and five wounded whereas the enemy had lost a large number in killed and wounded.

Capt Carter was now attacked on the extreme left, a large number of Infantry having occupied the houses and being between him and the Hotel, attacked by almost overwhelming numbers both of Infantry and Cavalry,—he slowly retired to the end of a wharf leading out into the sound and off into the extreme right. Here he maintained a continuous firing for an hour when I sent boats and had him brought to the Steamer.

This was at 12 o'clock. Skirmishes were constantly kept up as often as the enemy saw fit to come within the range of our guns from the Wharf and Hotel—The woods here but a few yards in the rear of our position and they kept within



such cover and fired constantly upon us.

I had expected up to this hour that the Gunboat *Jackson* would have opened with shell upon the woods in our front where were stationed large forces of Cavalry and Infantry within sight but beyond the range of our guns. I asked Capt Manton for God's sake to go aboard and ask the Army Officer to commence firing. From the distance that my boat was obliged to be at the wharf, my Howitzer was useless—she could not reach the enemy. They (the Confederates) were armed with Sharps Revolving Rifles and had a great advantage over us in range.

The Gunboat now fired three shell, but with no effect, appearing to care little whether we were overcome or not.—I then ordered my men to hold the place until we could recover our wounded and dead which we did.

**Friday, April 19<sup>th</sup> 1863**

(Continuation from Thursday). We then brought off all of our dead and wounded to the boat and had driven the enemy back from the lines holding our

base through the whole fight I now ordered the troops who had struggled aboard the Steamer and those who had been engaged in freeing wharf to sally out again and try to dislodge the Rebels from the houses in the village.

Just at this time I discovered heavy reinforcements of Cavalry coming down the Road,—and at the same moment the Gunboat *Jackson* unfortunately and mayhaps designedly, threw a shell into our column moving out the wharf killing instantly five men and wounding seven, and leaving a huge gap in the wharf leading to the boat. This created confusion and discouragement... and I immediately ordered the troops to rebuild the wharf which they did through a hot fire of the enemy, and to then fall back to the boat which they did in excellent order without losing ... but two men killed and a small number wounded. .... After the troops were aboard, I learned that still more and heavier Reinforcements had come up from Mobile with artillery and Infantry, and as I had with me but two rounds of ammunition and 180 men with

some seven officers and only a 12 lb Howitzer without shell, I concluded that it would be folly to make another attack as I could not depend upon the Gunboat.

Thus ended the only action the men of the 2nd Louisiana Native Guard Volunteers saw during their time at Ship Island. The duty on the island was dull and miserable to an extreme and Daniels' dairy brings it all to life. An interesting facet to the above account is that the Major Dumas written above was a mulatto whose full name was Alexandre Dumas.

Remember *The Count of Monte Cristo*, *The Three Musketeers*, *The Man in the Iron Mask*?

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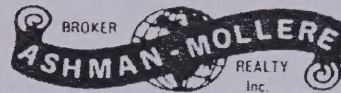
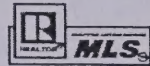
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